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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000145

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [ANATO](#) [EUN](#) [SI](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVENIA'S EXPECTATIONS FOR NATO BUCHAREST SUMMIT

REF: STATE 19516

Classified By: CDA Maryruth Coleman for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: On March 26, MFA Director of Division for Security Policy Stanislav Vidovic discussed with Emboff Slovenia's expectations for the April 2 - 4 NATO Summit in Bucharest. Vidovic expressed doubt that Slovenia will announce any increase or restructuring of its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) deployment in Afghanistan to allow for the provision of an Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) or participation in a PRT (per reftel), although he expects that Prime Minister Janez Jansa will announce a significant donation of military equipment to Afghanistan. Vidovic stated that Slovenia sees its participation in the KFOR mission in Kosovo as a contribution that can provide greater added value to NATO, and noted that Slovenia plans to keep its deployment at the current level of 350 troops at the next rotation in August or September. Vidovic emphasized Slovenia's strong support for NATO invitations to Croatia, Macedonia, and Albania and for Membership Action Plan (MAP) invitations to Ukraine and Georgia. Vidovic also inquired about U.S. intentions regarding the development of a new NATO Strategic Concept. END SUMMARY.

Not Willing to Break Eggs for an OMLT

12. (C) Asked about a March 18 letter from CDA Coleman to PM Jansa that requested that Slovenia consider restructuring its ISAF deployment to allow for the provision of at least one OMLT or participation in a PRT, Vidovic stated that the PM and his cabinet are currently considering the request. He shared, however, his personal view that it is highly unlikely that the GOS will decide to make any significant changes to Slovenia's ISAF deployment in the months preceding this autumn's parliamentary elections. Vidovic said that it is more likely that the PM will announce in Bucharest that Slovenia will make a significant donation of military equipment to Afghanistan in the near future, although he would not say what the donation would be. He also stated that the PM will announce that Slovenia will deploy for the first time two civilians to Afghanistan to participate in civil-military cooperation operations in the Herat PRT and that Slovenia may deploy additional civilians in the future. Seeking to justify Slovenia's unwillingness to restructure its ISAF deployment, Vidovic noted that someone must carry out the current mission of the Slovenian forces - to protect the advance air base in Herat. He also pointed to Slovenia's current deployment in Kosovo of 5% of its armed forces and its intention to maintain that level of deployment for the immediate future as a reason for not being able to do more in Afghanistan.

NATO Must Maintain Open Door Policy

The Adriatic Three

13. (C) Vidovic stated that Slovenia sees the decision of whether to invite the Adriatic Three - Croatia, Macedonia, and Albania - as the focal question for the Bucharest Summit.

He reiterated Slovenia's strong support for inviting all three aspiring countries, noting that if all three are not invited it will send a bad signal to the entire region. Regarding Macedonia's candidacy, Vidovic asserted that Slovenia believes that Greece is not playing fair and has changed the rules regarding the name issue in the middle of the game. He noted that support for NATO membership amongst the Macedonian public is the highest of any NATO member or candidate country, but he worried that there are signs that this could change if Macedonia is not extended an invitation at Bucharest. Vidovic expressed concern that some NATO members have remained too neutral regarding the current round of potential NATO invites and said that he hopes NATO allies will soon realize that NATO expansion in the Balkans is critical to the region's future stability.

MAP Invites for Ukraine and Georgia

14. (C) Vidovic also underscored the importance of extending MAP invitations to Ukraine and Georgia at the Bucharest Summit. Citing Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, Vidovic argued that NATO must recognize the political will to join the Alliance that exists in Ukraine and Georgia and that this should be the guiding factor in NATO's decision. Vidovic warned against allowing Russia's concerns about MAP invitations for Ukraine and Georgia to affect NATO's

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decision, noting that any show of weakness on this issue will set a bad precedent for future decisions. Vidovic stressed that a failure to invite Ukraine and Georgia will signal that NATO's Open Door Policy is an empty promise.

The Rest of the Western Balkans

15. (C) According to Vidovic, Slovenia would like to see NATO grant an intensified dialogue to Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He noted that some NATO allies, such as Poland and Belgium, oppose the opening of such a dialogue, but that Slovenia hopes to persuade them to accept such a move and would appreciate greater U.S. engagement on the issue. Vidovic argued that an intensified NATO dialogue could serve as a powerful tool to facilitate military and political reform in both countries. Vidovic also expressed hope that the Bucharest Summit would succeed in sending a positive message to Serbia. He advised that the alliance should not push Serbia too hard as he expects that it will not be long before the Serbian leadership and public will change their current attitudes about NATO and the EU.

The Need for a New NATO Strategic Concept

16. (C) Stepping away from the Bucharest Summit, Vidovic expressed concern about the lack of movement on the development of a new NATO Strategic Concept. Noting that the current concept was developed in 1999, Vidovic argued that it is time for an update that addresses many of today's important issues and reflects the changing nature of the Alliance. He stated that he has not seen any eagerness from the U.S. to approach a new Strategic Concept with enthusiasm and asked if the U.S. plans to fully engage on this issue soon.

Comment

17. (C) Post has also pressed the issue of Slovenia fielding OMLTs with State Secretary Matjaz Sinkovec, who saw the political value of Slovenia altering its deployment to add further value to ISAF. A/S Fried also raised it with FM Dimitrij Rupel during a January visit; however, Rupel was noncommittal and only promised to bring it to the PM's attention. Post believes that GOS concerns regarding the political risk of increasing Slovenian troops' exposure to harm in Afghanistan are sincere and that there are real constraints on what its military can contribute to international missions considering its relatively large deployment to Kosovo. Post suggests that Washington pass the message directly to PM Jansa at the Bucharest Summit that Slovenia should discuss with SHAPE possibly restructuring its deployment to field an OMLT. We could also try to address Slovenian concerns regarding its military capacity through an initiative to form a joint OMLT with the Colorado National Guard, with which the Slovenian Armed Forces have a State Partnership Program. Post has engaged Slovenia at all levels of the government and military to consider alterations to its ISAF contribution and sees the Bucharest Summit, which will be attended by the PM, FM, and Minister of Defense, as perhaps the last opportunity to press the GOS on this issue in advance of the US - EU Summit in Ljubljana in June and parliamentary elections in September. End Comment.
COLEMAN